

COLLECTION OVERVIEWS

GEOGRAPHIC AND CARTOGRAPHIC MATERIALS

I. SCOPE

This overview of the Library's collections deals with the geographic materials selected for the general collections and the cartographic materials acquired, processed, and managed by the Geography and Map Division.

"Geographic materials" is defined as materials related to the discipline of geography, including exploration and discovery, general geographic description and analysis, history of geographic thought, geographic bibliography, historical geography, and place-name literature.

"Cartographic materials" is defined as geospatial data presented graphically in the form of maps, atlases, globes, and three-dimensional maps and terrain models on varied media, e.g., paper, vellum, digital. Also included in the collections are remote sensing imagery and aerial photographs, cartographic microform, geographic information systems, and digital databases. It also includes cartographic literature in the form of books, serials, and pamphlets relating to cartography, controlled by the division card catalog and the Bibliography of Cartography; a Pamphlet File (51 linear feet); and finding aids including card catalogs, bibliographies, inventories, as well as the Library's online catalog. Excluded from this overview are geology, climatology, oceanography, astronomy, urban planning, and demography.

II. SIZE

The Geography and Map Division collections are the largest and most comprehensive cartographic collection in the world, numbering more than 5.5 million maps, atlases, globes, three-dimensional plastic relief models, microform, digital data, and reference works. Digital files containing geospatial data are found on a variety of formats, e.g., CDs, DVDs, tapes, data delivered on hard drives. The Library acquires cartographic material in digital databases, including 2000 U.S. Census and numerous Defense Department and U.S. Geological Survey topographical maps. Approximately 60,000 cartographic items are added to the permanent collections each year, including current publications as well as retrospective materials.

Selected Statistics on Holdings

Maps	5,300,000
Atlases	75,000
Microform Collections	5,400 reels of microfilm; 94,000 (105mm) microfiche
Digital Data	20,000 digital files
Cartographic Literature Housed in G&M Est. 9,000 vols.	

III. GENERAL RESEARCH STRENGTHS

The collection's greatest strength is its comprehensiveness, with original materials dating from the fourteenth-century to the present, providing coverage of every country on earth, the oceans of the world, and extraterrestrial bodies (moon, planets). It includes cartographic material in all formats, retrospective materials as well as the most recently produced, and is one of the few places in the U.S. where archival files of federally produced maps have been systematically retained.

Current domestic materials are received through government deposits made by Federal and state map producing agencies, copyright deposits, and solicitation programs directed toward local government agencies and associations. Foreign produced maps and charts are acquired through purchase, exchange, donation, and through the Library's field offices or the Department of State.

Retrospective items are obtained through government library transfers of outdated superseded maps, gifts, direct purchases and duplicate exchanges with other institutions. The variety of means of acquisition results in a collection that strives to acquire excellent contemporary coverage of every part of the world, with specific strengths in the areas of North America, the Western Hemisphere, Europe, reproductions from foreign archives, nautical charts, and digital data for use in geographic information systems.

The collection contains one of the finest holdings in the world of historical cartographic materials. That collection strength is especially significant for the thorough investigation of international boundary issues, land use over time, urban change, transportation nodes, geographical names (and change), and exploration and discovery.

IV. ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

The Division pursues the development of its cartographic and geospatial collection regardless of the format of the data. At present the Division holds some 20,000 digital files (CDs, DVDs, tapes, data acquired on varied storage media) and is developing the capacity to store and serve data from the Library's servers. The direction of map

production globally demands the constant need to acquire ever increasing amounts of geospatial data in digital formats and the ability to deliver to the Library's patrons such materials on demand in the Geography and Map Division reading room, or, through other arrangements. These digital files have been acquired primarily through purchase or deposit.

The collection provides global coverage, reflecting holdings that represent geospatial data produced and packaged by commercial sources, domestic and foreign governmental data producers and providers, and independent mapmakers. These resources are of considerable use for the Library's reference, in its support of the work of various government agencies, and the Congressional Cartography Program (Geography and Map Division) and the Congressional Research Service in its daily services to Congress. The electronic resources acquired follow closely the Division's established efforts to grow the collection so that it reflects the most contemporary data available and addresses the need to document the history of cartography.

The Division began to scan selected items in its analog collection in 1996 with some 14,000 historical and contemporary (those not impacted by copyright issues) items on line. Collaborative efforts with other governmental and public institutions (e.g., the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration, University of Texas, Library of Virginia, Virginia Historical Society) are developed to coordinate the creation of digital files of analog resources. In 2004 a joint web site of the Civil War maps in the Library of Congress (Geography and Map Division), the Library of Virginia and the Virginia Historical Society was opened, making available expanded resources for the study of the war from its cartographic perspective. Similar cooperative efforts to grow the collection and to make more readily available unique or near unique holdings of cartographic materials are actively pursued. Items that are scanned from the collection become part of the Library's digital files, available for all to use. Cartographic materials from the Library's collection appear routinely in Global Gateway presentations.

V. AREAS OF DISTINCTION

Discovery and Exploration of the Americas

A number of primary collections document the discovery and exploration of the Americas, both North and South America, with special emphasis on the Age of Discovery, European settlement throughout the hemisphere, and exploration of the Spanish Southwest (US) and the Trans-Mississippi West.

Notable holdings and special collections:

- Henry Harrisse Collection
- Johann Georg Kohl Collection
- Woodbury Lowery Collection
- U.S. Congressional Serial Set Collection

- Vellum Nautical Chart Collection
- Karpinski Collection of Photocopied Maps in French, Spanish, and Portuguese Archives
- Maggs Collection (nautical mapping of the Hispanic world)

History of Cartography

The collections document the history of printed cartography better than any other collection in the world. Among the earliest original maps in the collections are three manuscript portolan atlases and 19 portolan charts from the 14th through 17th-centuries drawn on vellum by Italian, Portuguese, French, and Spanish cartographers. The excellent collection of atlases dates from a 1482 printed edition of Claudius Ptolemy's Geography and includes representative volumes of all significant publishers of atlases of the last five centuries. The atlases cover individual continents, countries, states, counties, and cities, and other geographic regions, as well as the world, and they range in Scope from general to topical. In addition, the collection includes early globes and globe gores. Notable holdings and special collections:

- Coronelli Globes
- Portolan Charts
- Atlas collection
- Martin Waldseemuller's 1507 world map
- The Heezen-Tharp Collection (of oceanography)
- John Snyder, Alden Colvocoresses, and Fred Doyle Collection (satellite aided cartography)

American History

Division collections contain many resources for the study of United States geography, cartography, history, and the social sciences. A considerable number are unique to the collection and are related to other special collections such as Prints and Photographs and Manuscripts. The American Revolutionary Era is very well represented. The approximately 2000 maps that were cataloged as part of the Library's American Revolution Bicentennial program include manuscript field sketches of land and sea battles, troop positions, encampments, city and town plans, as well as engravings by noted eighteenth century mapmakers. Other areas of distinction include maps showing settlement patterns and internal improvements, such as panoramic, fire insurance, railroad, and state and county landownership maps. Another area of distinction is the American Civil War and other wars in which the United States was a participant. Notable holdings and special collections:

- William Faden Collection (British military maps, 18th-century)
- Richard Howe Collection (British maps of American Revolution)
- Rochambeau Collection and Atlas (French military maps, 1777- 83)
- American Map Collection (Rare printed maps)

- The Atlantic Neptune Collection (Hydrographic surveys of American coastline, 18th-century)
- Peter Force Collection (British and American maps, 1685-1842)
- Millard Fillmore Collection (Collected by President Fillmore)
- Jedediah Hotchkiss Collection (Confederate Civil War maps)
- William Tecumseh Sherman Collection (Civil War battle maps)
- County Landownership Map and Atlas Collection
- George Washington's maps (18th century manuscripts)
- General Lafayette's map of his campaigns in the U.S. Revolution (1777-1781)

Urban Development

One of the great strengths of the Library's holdings are maps and plans of American cities illustrating in great detail their growth and expansion through time and space.

Notable holdings and special collections:

- Sanborn Fire Insurance Map Collection (large scale maps of 12,000 cities, 1867-1970's)
- Panoramic Map Collection (views of 1,400 cities, 1820-1930)
- Washington D.C. Map Collection
- Real Estate Atlases of U.S. Cities

Official Large Scale Maps and Charts

The Library's collection of primary, large-scale national topographic, cadastral, and hydrographic survey maps is unrivalled. All major official surveying, mapping, and charting agencies worldwide are represented from the 18th-century to the present.

Notable holdings and special collections:

- Official large-scale topographic and thematic maps for most countries in the World, including all of the continents of the world—North and South America, Asia, Africa, Europe, Australia, and Antarctica.
- Nautical charts (including U.S. Hydrographic Office, U.S. Coast Survey, British Admiralty, and other nations' chart production)
- 2000 Census tract maps (DVD)

Thematic Atlases and Maps

The collection is very strong in the area of thematic cartographic materials, which documents educational, decorative, and ephemeral subjects. Recent acquisitions have added to this category of material.

Notable holdings and special collections:

- Melville Eastham Collection (Atlas pages)
- Ethel Fair Collection

- Hal Shelton Collection (Hand painted maps)
- Hauslab-Liechtenstein Collection (thematic and topographic maps of Europe, 19th-century)
- Richard Edes Harrison Map Collection
- Rare atlas collection

European: 19th and 20th-Centuries

The collection includes extensive information on place names, shifting borders, and change over time, and is particularly useful for genealogical research.

Notable holdings and special collections:

- National topographic map series
- Current and historical gazetteers
- Geographic and travel literature
- Atlas and map collection

East Asia

The holdings in the area of East Asian Studies are particularly strong for China, Japan, and Korea.

Notable holdings and special collections:

- East Asian Collection (Printed maps of China, Japan, and Korea)
- Arthur W. Hummel Collection (Manuscript and printed maps of China during Ming Period)
- Shannon McCune Collection (Maps and atlases of Korea)
- Langdon Warner Collection (Manuscript maps and atlases of Korea and China)
- Topographic Map Series
- Ino Tadataka Collection (Manuscript map of Japan, early 18th century)

VI. WEAKNESSES/EXCLUSIONS

The collection in general is a printed map and atlas collection. With some notable exceptions in the collection—mapping of the U.S. Revolutionary and Civil Wars, Spanish nautical mapping of its realm in the Eighteenth Century, portolan charts--most manuscript material produced by the U.S. Government is housed in the National Archives, while most manuscript material documenting the Colonial period of American history is housed in European archives. In addition, the great cartographic manuscripts documenting 15th-19th century European exploration and discovery, which are extremely important documents in American history, reside almost exclusively in libraries and archives in Europe. However, one of the strengths of the holdings is the large collection of photocopies of significant historical maps related primarily to the United States and the Americas are from European institutions.

In addition, until recently, the collection contained a paucity of original material documenting the compilation and construction of cartographic publications. Like most map collections, the Library has acquired the final published cartographic product, with little or no attention paid to how maps and cartographic materials are constructed and printed. Recent acquisition of the Merrian, Harrison, Snyder, Colvocoresses, Doyle, Heezen-Tharp, and Miller collections has strengthened the holdings in this area.

The cartographic collections do not include substantial holdings of aerial photographic materials or detailed infrastructure data.